

For Immediate Release January 3, 2005

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Midwinter thaw puts snowmobile tour on ice

LANSING – A Legislative snowmobile trip scheduled to begin today and conclude this Thursday has been postponed due to a lack of snow preventing the use of the trails.

State Sens. Jason Allen and Tony Stamas were planning to head out on the second "Snowmobile the North" tour today. Unfortunately, warm temperatures last week combined with recent rainfall melted a great deal of snow, leaving behind impassable snowmobile trails.

"Having to postpone this opportunity to promote winter tourism just shows how the weather can make or break a business' whole season," said Allen, R-Traverse City. "Thousands of tourism dollars have been lost in northern Michigan due to the recent warm, wet spell. I was really looking forward to riding the snow covered trails with Senator Stamas."

The tour was scheduled to begin and end in Gaylord and would span more than 600 miles across both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas.

"We definitely plan to reschedule this trip," said Stamas, R-Midland. "I'm anxious to get out there on the trails, have fun and see the full impact snowmobiling has on the state's winter tourism economy."

Planned stops for the tour included Alba, Mackinaw City, Trout Lake, Sault Ste. Marie, Cheboygan, Alpena, Lachine, Hillman, Atlanta, and Lewiston before returning to Gaylord.

Next week marks Snowmobile Safety Week. Michigan has more than 6,000 miles of groomed trails offering exciting terrain of forest and field to both residents and visitors. Michigan boasts over 400,000 registered snowmobiles, contributing over \$1 billion to the local economy every year.

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